

"Why Jesus had to be Resurrected," Part 3 - 1 Corinthians 15:29-34 – April 17th, 2016

- Today's teaching will be part three of a series I've titled, "Why Jesus had to be Resurrected."
- Up to this point, the Apostle Paul has argued his case as it were, by considering the unthinkable implications of no resurrection.
- Then after presenting that argument he turns a corner and argues his case by stating why it is that Jesus had to be resurrected.
- Now, here in our text today, Paul will turn yet another corner and continue his argument by proving the fact of the resurrection.
- What's really fascinating is how he does this, which is the evidence of the Holy Spirit inspiring him to take this brilliant approach.
- More specifically, the approach of first disproving their belief in no resurrection, then proving there is a resurrection of the dead.
- Before we dive into this, I think it would be helpful to have a little bit of the backstory first, as it relates to the Corinthian church.
- A false teaching had taken up residence in Corinth that misled some to believe that there was no resurrection from the dead.
- It's for this reason that we have a chapter such as this in our Bibles today, such that, it deals with the fact of the resurrection.
- What we're about to see are three indisputable facts concerning the resurrection of the dead, first and foremost that of Christ's.
- Perhaps better said, in the words of the Savior Himself in Luke 7:35, where he says, "wisdom is proved right by all her children."
- In other words, the offspring of that which is produced will prove that which it was produced from, namely, the wisdom of God.
- It's with this understanding that I think we're now ready to dive into our text, and in so doing, look at the evidence Paul presents.
- I see three exhibits, if you will, the first of which is "Exhibit A" found in verse twenty-nine, the evidence of baptism in the Lord.
- Exhibit B is evidence of sacrifice for the Lord in vs. 30-32, and Exhibit C is the evidence of holiness before the Lord in vs. 33-34

1. Baptism in the Lord (Verse 29)

- v29 Paul questions why it is that they are baptizing for the dead, if in fact there is no such thing as the resurrection of the dead.
- It seems that in addition to the false teaching of no resurrection, there was also the false teaching regarding the water baptism.
- Actually, this is the verse the Mormons use to teach that a person can be baptized in place of their loved ones who have died.
- You'll forgive me for wanting to stay on message and not digress into a teaching on water baptism, so suffice it to say, it's false.
- This for a number of reasons not the least of which is that it's rooted in another false teaching known as baptismal regeneration.
- At the risk of an oversimplification, baptismal regeneration is the false teaching that you have to be water baptized to be saved.
- Be that as it may, it should be noted that this particular verse is the source of much speculation amongst Bible commentators.
- I've personally read that there is so much debate about this verse, that one could find more than thirty attempts to interpret it.
- The reason being is, there are no other passages of scripture hermeneutically to explain exactly what the Corinthians did here.
- I would suggest that this was God's intent when He inspired Paul, by the Holy Spirit to write this in his epistle to the Corinthians.
- I suppose you could say Paul is himself, wanting to stay on message, and stick to the matter at hand, which is the resurrection.
- Specifically, the question of why those who don't believe in the resurrection of the dead, baptize people on behalf of the dead?
- This is why it's the brilliance of the Holy Spirit inspiring Paul to write this. Baptism is a symbol of death, burial and resurrection.
- Here the Corinthian Christians who don't believe in the resurrection of the dead, are actually doing something that disproves it.
- Here's the bottom line related to the point of the passage, their baptism for the dead, proves there is a resurrection of the dead.

2. Sacrifice for the Lord (Verses 30-32)

- v30 Paul shifts the focus off of what they were doing, to what he was doing, which is that Paul was endangering himself hourly.
- v31 He takes it further saying that he faces death every day just as surely as he boasts about them in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- v32 He says if there's no resurrection he's gained nothing fighting wild beasts so let's us just eat and drink, for we die tomorrow.
- Couple of thoughts on this most interesting passage, the first of which has to do with Paul risking his life fighting wild beasts.
- Here again commentators debate the identity of these beasts suggesting they were literal or more likely figurative in nature.
- I'm personally of the belief that it's figurative, in that, they were men acting like wild beasts who wanted to rip Paul to shreds.
- If that's the case, and I believe it is, then, it explains what Paul is saying here as proof that there is the resurrection of the dead.
- In other words, if there's no hope in the resurrection, then what would Paul have to gain by fighting with these men in Ephesus.
- Here's the point, if there's no resurrection we gain nothing by making sacrifices for the Lord, and face peril because of the Lord.

3. Holiness before the Lord (Verses 33-34)

- v33 Paul tells them to not be misled and then he goes on to quote a saying in that day, "Bad company corrupts good character."
- v34 He says to come back to their senses and stop sinning, as there are some who are ignorant of God and it's to their shame.
- It seems that in verse 34, the Apostle Paul is telling them to repent of the sin of believing the false teaching of no resurrection.
- What Paul is saying is that wrong beliefs lead to wrong behaving and conversely right beliefs will always lead to righteous living.
- In other words, our beliefs in life influence how we live our life, and false teaching, via bad company, never leads to a holy life.
- As we just read in Luke's gospel, we are the products of what we believe, whether our beliefs are unrighteous or are righteous.
- I'll close by simply saying if I believe there's no resurrection, then there's no motivation to live a life of holiness before the Lord.
- We need look no further than to the product of unrighteous living such that, it produces broken people, marriages, and families.
- However, righteous living is proved righteous; by that which it produces: holy living, godly marriages, and Christ like families.